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FAMOUS 1950s EC COMICS!

TEROR



NO. 21
SEPT



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CANADA

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING



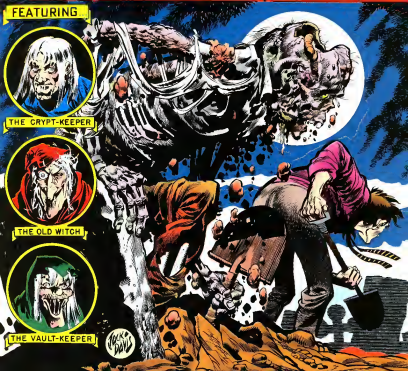
THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

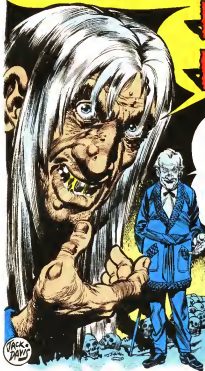
HEH, HEH! BACK FOR MORE, FIENDISH FANS? WELCOME AGAIN TO THE CRAWLY CRYPT. THIS IS YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER... YOUR HOST IN HOWLS, MASTER OF SCARE-A-MONIES, AND A! TERROR-TALE-TELLER... READY TO REVEAL ANOTHER REVOLTING RECITATION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LOATHSOME LITERATURE. THIS SPINE-TINGLING SCREAM-STORY WILL BE TOLD BY A DR. CARL WINSTON, IN HIS OWN WHIMPERING WORDS. DR. WINSTON... IF YOU PLEASE... GO AHEAD WITH THE YELP-YARN YOU CALL...

DEAD RIGHT!

JOSEPH FAIRBANKS AND I HAD BEEN LIFE-LONG FRIENDS. WE'D MET IN MEDICAL SCHOOL, AND THROUGH OUR INTERNSHIP AND ON INTO OUR PRACTICING YEARS OUR FRIENDSHIP HAD GROWN. JOSEPH HAD BECOME ONE OF THE NATION'S OUTSTANDING SURGEONS, AND I'D ENJOYED NO SMALL SUCCESS AS A HEART SPECIALIST. NEITHER OF US HAD MARRIED AND CONSEQUENTLY, AS WE'D GROWN OLDER, WE'D SOUGHT EACH OTHER'S COMPANY MORE AND MORE TO FILL THE LONELINESS OF BACHELOR LIFE. WHEN OUR WHIRL DAYS HAD PASSED, AND A CONTENTMENT FOR JUST SITTING BY AN OPEN FIRE AND SIPPING BRANDY HAD COME UPON US, WE'D MADE IT A POINT TO VISIT EACH OTHER'S HOMES AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK... USUALLY ON FRIDAY NIGHTS...

GOOD EVENING,
JOSEPH!

COME IN, CARL... COME
IN!



JACK
DAVIS

SINCE NEITHER JOSEPH NOR I HAD FAMILIES OR CLOSE RELATIVES, IN DEFERENCE TO OUR CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WE HAD ARRANGED OUR WILLS SO THAT WE WERE EACH OTHERS' INHERITORS.

SIT DOWN, CARL! WILL IT BE THE USUAL? BRANDY?

YES, JOSEPH! AH... THE FIRE FEELS GOOD TONIGHT. THIS DAMP WEATHER ALWAYS SETTLES IN MY BONES.



OF COURSE, JOSEPH AND I HAD HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, TOO, LIKE THAT SILLY THEORY OF HIS THAT HE WOULD UNFAILINGLY BRING UP EVERY TIME WE WERE TOGETHER...

BUT, ACTUALLY, CARL, HOW DO WE KNOW? HOW DO WE KNOW A MAN IS REALLY DEAD? WHO'S TO SAY THAT HE CANNOT HEAR OR SEE OR FEEL WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND HIM?

BECAUSE, MY DEAR JOSEPH, HIS HEART HAS STOPPED! THE BLOOD NO LONGER FLOWS TO HIS BRAIN! THE CELLS DIE FOR LACK OF OXYGEN!



I THINK THAT THE OLDER WE'D GOTTEN, THE MORE CHILDISH WE'D BECOME ABOUT THIS CONTINUOUS DISAGREEMENT OVER JOSEPH'S RIDICULOUS THEORY. WE'D COME TO FIGHT ABOUT IT AS TWO CHILDREN FIGHT OVER WHO'S TO BE 'IT' IN TAG...

AH... THAT IS THE POINT, CARL! SUPPOSE THE BRAIN CELLS DO NOT DIE MINUTES AFTER THE HEART STOPS. SUPPOSE THEY CONTINUE TO LIVE FOR HOURS... MAYBE DAYS?

BUT WE KNOW THAT BRAIN CELLS CANNOT LAST FIFTEEN MINUTES WITHOUT OXYGEN!

IN THEIR NORMAL STATE... YES, BUT SUPPOSE THAT AT THE MOMENT OF HEART CESSATION... WHETHER THROUGH BODY INJURY OR SIMPLE FAILURE... SUPPOSE THAT THE BRAIN CELLS GO INTO A STATE OF SHOCK... OF REDUCED METABOLISM...

REDUCED METABOLISM?! SNOCK?! HOW RIDICULOUS!

BUT ISN'T IT POSSIBLE, CARL, THAT THE SENSORY FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY CAN CONTINUE AFTER WHAT WE PRESUMPTUOUSLY CALL 'DEATH'?

IF THE BRAIN CELLS DIE, SENSORY FUNCTIONS CEASE!



RIDICULOUS? NO! POSSIBLE! VERY POSSIBLE! IN A STATE OF SHOCK, WHERE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BRAIN CELL WERE CURTAILED, THE LITTLE OXYGEN LEFT IN THE PROTOPLASM AT THE MOMENT OF HEART FAILURE WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PROLONG THE LIFE OF THE GELL FOR HOURS.

SO A DEAD MAN IS NOT REALLY DEAD WHEN HE IS PRONOUNCED DEAD, EH? HE CAN STILL FEEL AND SEE AND HEAR, ALTHOUGH HE CANNOT MOVE...

EXACTLY! THINK OF THE NUMBER OF CORPSES YOU'VE SEEN WHOSE EYES ARE STILL OPEN... WHOSE EYES WE THOUGHTFULLY PRESS CLOSED WITH PENNIES OR WADS OF COTTON UNDER THE LIDS. THINK OF THE HORROR OF HAVING YOUR EYES FORCED SHUT AND HELD SHUT... WHEN YOUR EYES CAN STILL SEE...

JOSEPH! THIS THEORY OF YOURS IS SHEER POPPY-COCK!



THINK OF THE HORROR OF LISTENING TO YOUR BLOOD BEING PUMPED FROM YOUR BODY OF EMBALMING FLUID BEING FORCED IN! THE PAIN! THE EXCRUCIATING PAIN! AND LISTENING TO YOUR OWN FUNERAL CEREMONY... OF FEELING THE CLOSENESS OF THE COFFIN... THE LID SLAMMING SHUT... PERHAPS BEING NAILED!

STOP IT, JOSEPH!

THINK OF FEELING YOURSELF BEING LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE... THE THUMPING OF EARTH BEING SHOVELLED DOWN ON TOP OF YOU... AND THEN... ONLY THEN... FADING AND ACTUALLY DYING!

GOOD LORD, JOSEPH, I SHALL LEAVE THIS MINUTE IF YOU PERSIST IN CONTINUING THIS SHOULSH CONVERSATION...

AS I SAID, WE WERE JUST LIKE CHILDREN. I HAD TO THREATEN TO LEAVE IN ORDER TO GET JOSEPH TO STOP HIS NONSENSE. THE REST OF THE EVENING WOULD BE PLEASANT AND WE'D REMAIN THE BEST OF FRIENDS, BUT LAST NIGHT WAS DIFFERENT. LAST NIGHT WAS VERY DIFFERENT...

SIT DOWN, CARL! WILL IT BE THE USUAL? BRANDY!

YES, JOSEPH! BRANDY WILL BE FINE!

LAST NIGHT WE'D SAT BEFORE THE FIRE, SIPPING OUR BRANDIES, AND JOSEPH DIDN'T ONCE BRING UP HIS RIDICULOUS THEORY. INSTEAD HE TALKED OF INVESTMENTS AND BAD LUCK AND SOME SUCH NONSENSE. I HADN'T PAID MUCH ATTENTION. FACT IS, I'D THOUGHT OF A NEW ARGUMENT AGAINST HIS THEORY AND WAS WAITING, MULLING IT OVER IN MY MIND...

SO YOU SEE, CARL. I'M BANKRUPT!

EH? WHA...? JOSEPH! DID YOU SAY YOU'RE BANKRUPT?

THAT'S RIGHT, CARL. AND I'M BADLY IN DEBT! I NEED MONEY! A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY!

WHY I'LL GLADLY LEND YOU WHAT YOU NEED, JOSEPH!

LEND, CARL? DON'T BE SILLY! I'M TAKING IT! YOUR WHOLE FORTUNE! YOU SEE... I'VE POISONED YOUR BRANDY...

JOSEPH! NO!

I STAGGERED TO MY FEET. I FELT WEAK AND DIZZY AND MY LEGS AND ARMS WERE TINGLING...

DON'T BOTHER TRYING ANY EMETICS, CARL. THE POISON IS A FAST-ACTING ONE. YOU'LL BE DEAD IN A MOMENT.

JOSEPH! HOW COULD YOU...

I WAS HALF-WAY ACROSS THE ROOM WHEN I SIMPLY COLLAPSED TO THE FLOOR. I TRIED TO MOVE. I TRIED TO SPEAK. IT WAS AS THOUGH I WERE COMPLETELY PARALYZED.

GOOD-BYE, CARL. THANK YOU FOR THE INHERITANCE.



HE CAME AND STOOD OVER ME. I COULD SEE CLEARLY, YET I COULDN'T MOVE MY EYES. THEY WERE GLUED IN THE ONE POSITION. JOSEPH MOVED INTO MY LINE OF VISION AND KNELT BESIDE ME. I FELT HIM LIFT MY LIMP HAND...

NO PULSE. YOU'RE DEAD, CARL! STONE DEAD!



DEAD? HOW COULD I BE DEAD? I COULD SEE... I COULD FEEL... I COULD HEAR JOSEPH DIALING THE TELEPHONE...

HELLO, NORTON FUNERAL PARLOR? THAT YOU, BEN? THIS IS DOCTOR JOSEPH FAIRBANKS. YOU'D BETTER GET OVER HERE AND BRING YOUR WICKER...



DOCTOR CARL WINSTON NO! JUST DIED! YES. AT MY HOUSE! HEART ATTACK... OH, PLEASE. NO!



I HEARD JOSEPH HANG UP. I HEARD HIM APPROACH AND I SAW HIS FACE WHEN HE LEANED OVER ME... HIS LEERING FACE...

POOR CARL! HOW WE USED TO ARGUE... ABOUT SILLY THEORIES... THEORIES THAT I DIDN'T BELIEVE MYSELF!



OH LORD, WHAT HE WAS SAYING TO ME... THINKING I COULDN'T HEAR... KNOWING I WAS DEAD...

BUT I NEVER COULD GET YOU ANGRY ENOUGH, COULD I, CARL? I NEVER COULD GET YOU SO UPSET YOU'D DROP DEAD! NO! I HAD TO POISON YOU TO GET YOUR MONEY... YOUR ESTATE...



THEN, A PAIN... A HORRIBLE EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN MY CHEST... AND JOSEPH GRINNING DOWN AT ME AND BRAGGING...

IT WILL BE SIMPLE, CARL. I'M A PHYSICIAN. I'LL SIGN THE DEATH CERTIFICATE. DEATH... BY NATURAL CAUSES. NO ONE WOULD QUESTION A SURGEON'S WORD... AH. THE BELL! THE UNGERTAKER IS HERE...



BEN NORTON CAME IN LOOKING VERY SAD. JOSEPH'S VOICE CHANGED. NOW, AS HE SPOKE, HE SOUNDED GENUINELY BEREAVED...

IT WAS AWFUL, BEN? AWFUL! ONE MINUTE, SITTING AND DRINKING! THE NEXT MINUTE, DEAD!

HOW'D IT HAPPEN, DOC?

WE WERE ARGUING ABOUT SOMETHING OR OTHER. A MEDICAL THEORY OF MINE. CARL WAS SHOUTING. HE MUST HAVE BECOME TOO EMOTIONALLY UPSET. HIS HEART.

TOO BAD. SUCH A NICE GUY! WELL...I'LL GET HIS BODY ON DOWNTOWN...

I'LL GO WITH YOU, BEN! OH... SINCE I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD CARL HAD... NO FAMILY, YOU KNOW... THERE'S NO USE DRAGGING THIS OUT. ARRANGE FOR A SMALL DIGNIFIED FUNERAL... TOMORROW...

SURE! WHY WASTE TIME? I GOT A WICKER IN THE TRUCK. C'MON AND HELP ME...



YOU... YOU WHO ARE READING THIS STORY! HOW CAN YOU UNDERSTAND HOW I FELT? HOW CAN YOU KNOW THE HORROR THAT GREPT UP MY RIGID SPINE? I WAS DEAD. DEAD BY ALL STANDARDS. AND YET I COULD FEEL... COULD HEAR... COULD SEE THINGS MOVE AS THEY LIFTED ME AND PLACED ME INTO THE WICKER...

YEP. NICE GUY... THE DOC WAS...

HEAVY THOUGH. HEAVY PEOPLE ARE MORE APT TO SUFFER HEART TROUBLE...



I COULD SEE THEM LOOKING DOWN AT ME. BUT I COULDN'T BLINK... COULDN'T MOVE AN EYELID... COULDN'T LIVE... EVER AGAIN...

LOOK, BEN. HIS EYES...

YEAH. I KNOW. THEY'RE OPEN. ALMOST LIKE HE WAS SEEN' US, EH? WELL...



BEN REACHED DOWN AND I FELT HIS FINGERTIPS TOUCH MY EYELIDS, PUSHING THEM CLOSED. AND NOW I WAS SHROUDED IN THE DARKNESS OF DEATH. BUT I COULD STILL HEAR. I COULD STILL FEEL THEM LIFT THE WICKER AND CARRY ME. I COULD IMAGINE WHAT WAS HAPPENING. THEY WERE PUTTING ME INTO THE BACK OF THE BLACK PANEL TRUCK WITH THE BLACK CURTAINED WINDOWS...

EASY, NOW...

WHY...? HE CAN'T FEEL THE GUMPS...



I COULD HEAR THEM GET IN THE FRONT... HEAR THE ENGINE START... FEEL THE MOTION OF RIDING... RIDING INTO TOWN TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR...

WELL... HERE WE ARE.

HELP ME GET HIM OUT...



I COULD HEAR THE BACK DOORS OPEN AGAIN. I COULD FEEL THE WICKER BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED INTO THE COLD WHITE ROOM WITH THE NEEDLES AND TUBES. I COULD SMELL THE PERFUME THAT TRIED TO HIDE THE FORMALDEHYDE DOOR...



PUT IT DOWN
HERE...

YES...

I COULD FEEL MYSELF BEING LIFTED... BEING PLACED ON A COLD SURFACE... A MARBLE TABLE...



I'LL GET THINGS READY!
CARE TO WATCH?

I DON'T MIND...

I COULD HEAR THE RUSTLING WHISPER OF HOSES, THE SHARP CLINKING OF BOTTLES, THE HUM OF PUMP-MOTORS STARTING...



FIRST... WE DRAIN
THE BLOOD.

I SEE...

I FELT WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A NEEDLE ENTERING MY ARM, BUT THERE WAS NO PAIN. JOSEPH HAD BEEN WRONG. THERE WAS NO PAIN, EVEN AS THE LAST DROP OF BLOOD DRIPPED OUT OF MY BODY AND I HEARD IT GURLING DOWN A DRAIN SOMEWHERE...



NOW THE
EMBALMING
FLUID!

OH...

ANOTHER PUMP. ANOTHER NEEDLE PRESSING AGAINST MY DEAD FLESH. MORE GURLING...



I'LL SEE ABOUT
A GOFFIN!

NOT TOO
EXPENSIVE,
NOW!

JOSEPH DIDN'T WANT TO SEE HIS MONEY WASTED. NOT TOO EXPENSIVE. I WANTED TO SCREAM, BUT HOW COULD I? DEAD MEN DON'T SCREAM. THEY ONLY LIE STIFFLY... LISTENING... FEELING... AND CRYING INSIDE...



THIS ONE WILL DO!
REASONABLE, TOO!
HELP ME GET HIM
INTO IT!

FINE...

I WAS BEING LIFTED AGAIN. NOW I COULD FEEL THE SMOOTH SATIN AGAINST MY DEAD HANDS. THE CAMPHOR SMELL OF NEWNESS. I WAS BEING PUT INTO MY GOFFIN...



THERE...

NOW... YOU'LL ARRANGE
EVERYTHING... THE FUNERAL...
THE PLOT?

HOW LONG I LAY THERE I DO NOT KNOW. PERHAPS TIME, TO ONE DEAD, IS IMMEASURABLE. THE LID WAS SLAMMING DOWN...



BEING NAILED...



I WAS BEING MOVED AGAIN. A VOICE... EULOGIZING ME... MY FUNERAL ORATION. I WAS HEARING IT ALL...



A MOTOR. THE COOLNESS OF OPEN AIR. I WAS BEING LOWERED INTO THE GRAVE. THE VOICE...



THE HOLLOW BOON OF DIRT CRASHING DOWN UPON THE COFFIN LID. THE HORROR... THE SCREAMING SILENT HORROR OF IT...



AND NOW, THE SHOVELING HAS STOPPED. THERE IS LAUGHTER AND VOICES...



THE LID IS CRACKING OPEN. A RUSH OF FRESH AIR CARRESSES MY FACE...



A FINGER TOUCHES MY EYES. THE NIGHT STARS TWINKLE DOWN AT ME. JOSEPH'S FACE CUTS ACROSS THEM, BLOCKING THEM OUT...



YOU'RE PARALYZED, CARL. YOU'RE NOT REALLY DEAD. IT'S A NEW TYPE ANAESTHETIC! I PUT IT INTO YOUR BRANDY!

JOSEPH GRINS AT ME. BEN NORTON IS BESIDE HIM...



WE STAGED THIS, CARL... BEN AND I, TOGETHER! YOU'RE IN THE GARDEN OUT IN BACK OF MY HOUSE...

IT ISN'T MORNING YET, CARL!

THE DRUG WILL BE WEARING OFF SOON...

WE DIDN'T EVEN GO TO THE FUNERAL PARLOR! I JUST DROVE YOU AROUND!



THEN WE BROUGHT YOU BACK TO THE HOUSE... INTO MY OFFICE. WE PRETENDED IT WAS THE FUNERAL PARLOR...



I LENT DOC FAIRBANKS A FEW OF MY PUMPS FOR SOUND EFFECTS... AND THIS COFFIN...

IT WAS A GAG, CARL. I WANTED TO SHOW YOU THAT MY THEORY COULD BE RIGHT! YOU ALMOST BELIEVED IT, DIDN'T YOU CARL? DIDN'T YOU?



DOC. IT'S FIVE-THIRTY! SHOULDN'T HE BE COMING OUT OF IT?

IT'S MORNING NOW. THE STARS HAVE GONE AND I FEEL THE SUN ON MY FACE. JOSEPH IS PLEADING WITH ME... TEARS IN HIS EYES. BEN NORTON'S FACE JUST GETS PALER AND PALER...



CARL! FOR GOD'S SAKE, CARL! COME OUT OF IT! IT'S A GAG, CARL. COME OUT OF IT... PLEASE...

OH, LORD HELP US...

POOR JOSEPH AND HIS THEORY. HE WANTED SO MUCH FOR ME TO ACCEPT IT. AND NOW I HAVE ACCEPTED IT! ONLY HE WON'T KNOW HE'S RIGHT! NOT UNTIL HE GOES THROUGH WHAT I'VE GONE THROUGH. FOR I AM DEAD. I DIED OF A HEART ATTACK JUST BEFORE THE UNDERTAKER GAME!

HEH, HEH! SO NEXT TIME YOU MEET A CORPSE, KIDDIES, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY, EH? YOU MIGHT HURT ITS NON-FEELINGS. AND NOW THAT YOU'VE FINISHED TELLING US YOUR LITTLE TALE, CARL, YOU CAN GO CRAWL BACK INTO YOUR COFFIN AGAIN AND I'LL TUCK YOU IN WITH A BLANKET OF GRAVE-SRAVEL. WHILE I'M SHOVELING, FIENDS, WHY DON'T YOU SHOVEL ALONG TO THE VAULT-KEEPER WHO,



BREATHLESSLY AND DRIPPING CROOL, AWATS WITH HIS GUEST-SPOT GORE-TALE, COMPLETE WITH GUARANTEED ACCOMPANYING NIGHTMARE. I'LL DIG YOU LATER!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HDI, HEN! WELCOME TO THE VAULT OF HORROR, HIDIOTS. THIS IS YOUR SCREAM-STORY-SPINNER, THE VAULT-KEEPER, WAITING TO NARRATE ANOTHER NAUSEATING TALE FROM MY GREEPS-COLLECTION. SO COME IN, SIT DOWN, AND I'LL BEGIN. THIS WILL BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR YOU... SO RELAX AND BECOME THE MAIN CHARACTER IN A STORY THAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS TO YOU. I CALL THIS YELP-YARN...

PLEASANT SCREAMS!

IT IS AS IF YOU WERE SUDDENLY MOLDED OUT OF SILENCE AND INFINITE BLACKNESS AND YOU ARE NOW STANDING IN A STORMSWEEPED FOREST, FEELING THE WIND ON YOUR FACE AND HEARING THE SIGHING TREES BENDING UNDER ITS ON-SLAUGHT. YOU CANNOT REMEMBER ANYTHING BEFORE THIS MOMENT, THE PAST IS A VOID WITHOUT MEMORIES OR RECOLLECTIONS, AND YOU KNOW ONLY THAT YOUR NAME IS FELIX PURDY AND THAT YOU ARE AFRAID...



THERE IS A CRAWLING FEAR IN YOU, FELIX PURDY. YOU STAND BELOW THE TOWERING WINDSWEEPED TREES AND THE CLOUDS ABOVE LOOM LIKE MYSTERIOUS GHOST-SHAPES THAT HURRY BY BELOW A COLD MOON. YOUR HANDS TREMBLE AND YOUR BLOOD RUNS COLD AND YOUR HEART THROBS WILDLY IN YOUR CHEST. AND THEN YOU HEAR THE INHUMAN HOWL...



SHEER TERROR ROOTS YOU TO THE SPOT AND YOU SWAY LIKE THE TREES THAT SURROUND YOU...WAITING... LISTENING... AS THE HOWLING THING COMES CLOSER... AND THEN IT BURSTS FROM THE BLACK OVERGROWTH, AND THE MOON-CLOUDS PART SO THAT THE COLD MOON ILLUMINATES IT...



AND NOW YOU'RE RUNNING, FELIX, AND SCREAMING, AND THE INHUMAN WOLF-THING IS LOPING AFTER YOU, FANGS BARED AND SPITTLE DROOLING FROM ITS FLAME-RED MOUTH...



YOU RUN TILL YOUR HEART IS A HAMMER SLAMMING INSIDE YOUR CHEST, NOW YOU CAN FEEL THE HOT FOUL BREATH OF THE WEREWOLF CLOSE BEHIND YOU...



SUDDENLY YOUR LEGS ARE RUBBER COLLAPSING BENEATH YOU AND YOU SPRAWL ON THE GROUND. THE WEREWOLF IS OVER YOU, ITS BLAZING EYES STARING DOWN, A LOW TRIUMPHANT GROWL ERUPTING FROM ITS HEAVING CHEST. IT HESITATES, WAITING WHILE YOU SCREAM AND COWER BEHIND UPRAISED PROTECTING ARMS...



AND THEN IT SPRINGS UPON YOU, AND ITS RAZOR-SHARP CLAWS ARE TEARING AT YOUR FLESH AND ITS KNIFE-LIKE FANGS ARE SINKING INTO YOUR BODY AND PULLING AND RIPPING AND SLASHING...



SUDDENLY THERE IS BLACKNESS AROUND YOU, ENDING THE PAIN, ENDING THE HORROR, AND THEN THE BLACKNESS FADES AND YOU ARE STANDING IN AN ALLEYWAY BETWEEN TALL BUILDINGS WITH BOARDED WINDOWS AND LOCKED DOORS AND YOU ARE AFRAID AGAIN...



YOU KNOW YOU ARE FELIX PURDY AND YOU KNOW YOU ARE A HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHER, BUT YOU CANNOT REMEMBER ANYTHING OF YOUR PAST... YOUR CHILDHOOD... LAST YEAR... LAST MONTH. YOU'VE SUDDENLY FOUND YOURSELF... AND YOU ARE YOU, AND THERE IS NO YESTERDAY... AND NOW YOU ARE IN AN ALLEY... AND FOOTSTEPS APPROACH...



A SHADOW LEAPS ACROSS THE GAPING ENTRANCE TO THE ALLEY. YOU COWER BACK INTO THE GLOOM. IT PEERS IN, ITS SLANTED EYES GLOWING, ITS NEEDLE-LIKE FANGS GLITTERING...



A BREEZE STIRS, RUSTLING PAPERS ON A TRASH PILE BEHIND YOU, SPINNING UP THE ALLEYWAY, CARRYING YOUR SCENT TO THE VAMPIRE'S SENSITIVE NOSTRILS. IT LIFTS ITS ARMS AND THE BLACK CAPE DRAPES FROM THEM LIKE BAT-WINGS AND THERE IS A DULL BEATING SOUND AS IT SEEMS TO GLIDE TOWARD YOU...



FOR A MOMENT YOU STAND CRINGING, FLATTENED AGAINST THE BUILDING WALL LIKE A YELLOWED POSTER, WATCHING IN MORBID FASCINATION AS THE BLOOD-HUNGRY BEAST MOVES TOWARD YOU...

AND THEN HORROR STRIKES AT YOU, SENDING YOU FLAILING DOWN THE ALLEY... DOWN INTO THE SHADOWS... RUNNING FROM THE HIDEOUS THING BEHIND YOU...

THE BOARD FENCE IS HIGH AND FLAT AND EXPRESSIONLESS. YOU FALL AGAINST IT SOBING. IT'S A BLIND ALLEY, AND YOU ARE TRAPPED... AND THE BEATING SOUND IS BEHIND YOU CLOSING IN ON YOU. YOU SINK TO YOUR KNEES...



AND NOW THE VAMPIRE IS BENDING OVER YOU AND YOU CAN FEEL ITS NEEDLE-FANGS SINKING DEEP INTO YOUR THROAT AND ITS DRY LIPS SUCKING AROUND THE WOUNDS, DRAWING IN THE RED LIFE-FLUID IT CRAVES...

NOW EVERYTHING IS FADING AND THERE IS DARKNESS AGAIN AND YOU ARE STANDING IN A GRAVEYARD AND YOUR EYES ARE FILLED WITH TEARS. YOU ARE FELIX PURDY, SCHOOL TEACHER, WITH NO YESTERDAY AND NO TOMORROW, AND ONLY THE HORROR OF THE PRESENT TO LIVE FOR...



THE GRAVEYARD ECHOES WITH THE SILENCE OF DEATH AND THE TOMBSTONES ARE BLANK FACES THAT DO NOT SMILE OR CRY OR SHOW PITY FOR YOU. THE MOUNDS ARE HEAPED HIGH OVER THE LATE AND DEPARTED AND THEIR GRASS IS YELLOWED FROM WINTER'S CHILL. YOU STAND AND WAIT, HALF-EXPECTING, HALF-KNOWING.



AND THEN YOU HEAR THE DRAGGING SOUND... THE SOUND OF FEET LONG DEAD AND DECOMPOSED AND CRAWLING WITH DECAY AND THE SLIME OF THE GRAVE. YOU HEAR THE DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS IN THE CHILL OF THE NIGHT, MOVING SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, UPON THE MOUNDS AND AROUND THE GRAVE MARKERS AND OVER THE DRY GRASS. AND YOU WAIT...



YOUR EYES BORE INTO THE DARKNESS AND YOU SEE THE ROTTING FOUL-SMELLING CORPSE STUMBLING TOWARD YOU. YOU GRIT YOUR TEETH, FIGHTING OFF THE REVULSION THAT SWEEPS OVER YOU...



AND NOW THE THING IS UPON YOU AND ITS OODOR SEARS YOUR NOSTRILS AND YOUR STOMACH HEAVES AND YOU HOLD YOUR BREATH SO AS NOT TO SUCK THE FETID STENCH INTO YOUR LUNGS. YOU FEEL THE PUTRID ARMS AROUND YOU AND THE MOLDY FLESH FALLING AWAY AND THE BONE FINGERS CRUSHING THE LIFE FROM YOU...



BUT YOUR LIFE DOES NOT FADE. ONLY THE SCENE FADES ONCE MORE, AND YOU STILL EXIST. THE BLACKNESS DESCENDS LIKE A CURTAIN AND LIFTS, AND THE GUILLOTINE RISES INTO THE MOONLIGHT...



YOU ARE FELIX PUROY, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER. YOU ARE RESIGNED TO YOUR ROLE IN THIS GORY MATINEE. YOU WALK TO THE GUILLOTINE-STEPS AS IF YOU HAVE REHEARSED THIS ACTION WELL...



YOU LOOK UP AT THE GLEAMING BLADE HANGING BETWEEN THE TRACKS THAT CLIMB TOWARD THE STARLESS SKY. YOU KNEEL... RESIGNED...



YOU PLACE YOUR HEAD IN THE HOLLOWED KNIFE-BED AND YOU STARE DOWN AT THE WOVEN BASKET WAITING PATIENTLY TO RECEIVE ITS DUE. YOU HEAR THE BLADE SQUEELING DOWNWARD AND AN INVOLUNTARY CRY ESCAPES YOUR QUIVERING LIPS.



AND NOW YOU ARE BEHIND THE BLACK CURTAIN AGAIN, WAITING FOR THE NEXT TORTUROUS SCENE TO BE UNVEILED. YOU FLOAT IN A SEA OF DARKNESS... CRYING, WAITING, SPINNING...



AND YET, YOU SEEM TO RECALL A ROOM... LONG AGO... FAR AWAY... A ROOM WITH WHITE LEERING FACES... LITTLE MONSTERS... AND A LITTLE EVIL THING THAT SAT AND STARED AT YOU ANO... AND... BUT IT IS ONLY A FAINT RECOLLECTION... AS THOUGH IT NEVER REALLY EXISTED...



AND NOW THE CURTAIN IS LIFTING AND THE SEA OF DARKNESS IS RECEDING AND YOU ARE STANDING IN AN OPEN FIELD WITH FOG CLINGING TO THE HOLLOW PLACES, AND THERE IS A GIGGLING. FACES... WHITE, LEERING FACES... SURROUND YOU...



AND THEN YOU SEE THE YAWNING PIT BEHIND THEM AND YOU SEE THE SHOVELS IN THEIR HANDS AND THEY CLOSE IN ON YOU... GIGGLING...



LITTLE CLAWING HANDS SEIZE YOU, PUSH YOU, AND YOU STIFFEN. BUT THERE ARE MANY HANDS AND YOU SKID TOWARD THE GAPING HOLE... SO LONG... SO NARROW... SO DEEP...



NOW YOUR FEET ARE AT THE PIT-EDGE, SLIDING. THE DIRT CHATTERS AS IT DROPS IN, AND THE MANY HANDS PUSH, AND YOU ARE FALLING... FALLING...



YOU LIE IN THE MOIST COLD EARTH AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOLE AND YOU LOOK UP AT THEIR GRINNING FACES. THEN, YOU HEAR THE CRUNCHING SOUND AS A SPACE DIGG INTO THE MOUND OF SOIL BESIDE THE EXCAVATION...



HEE, HEE... EH, EH...

THE DIRT CRASHES DOWN ON YOU, AND THE GIGGLING GROWS LOUDER. SPACES FLY... EARTH FALLS, YOU SCREAM... AND THE LAUGHTER SCREAMS BACK AT YOU.



YAA A AHH... HA-HA-HA...

YOU ARE FELIX PURDY, HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, FLOATING IN DARKNESS, LISTENING TO LAUGHTER... ENTHUSIASTIC, EFFERVESCENT LAUGHTER, YOUNG LAUGHTER. THE LAUGHTER OF...



HIGH SCHOOL BOYS... AND GIRLS!

HA HA HA

YOU ARE FELIX PURDY... WITH NO PAST AND NO FUTURE... A CREATURE BORN OF NOW... BORN TO SUFFER... TO DIE A MILLION TIMES IN ONE BRIEF SPAN OF EXISTENCE. AND SOMEWHERE, REALITY IS LAUGHING AT YOU...



OH, LORD! I KNOW! I KNOW WHO I AM!

HA HA HA

YOU HAVE DIED MANY TIMES IN THIS, YOUR BRIEF LIFE-SPAN, FELIX PURDY. YOU HAVE DIED IN MANY HORRIBLE VICIOUS WAYS. BUT NOW YOU KNOW...



IN A MOMENT... IN A MOMENT I'M GOING TO REALLY DIE!

YES, FELIX PURDY SOMEWHERE, REALITY IS LAUGHING AT YOU. THE REALITY THAT SURROUNDS YOUR CREATOR...



I'M A DREAM... A CHARACTER IN A DREAM I LIVE IN SOMEONE'S MIND!

AND THE LAUGHTER IS DESTROYING YOU, FELIX. EVEN NOW YOU CAN FEEL YOURSELF FADING...



AND HE... THE SLEEPING ONE... THE ONE WHO IS DREAMING OF ME... IS WAKING UP!

FOR THIS, THEN, IS YOUR **REAL DEATH**, FELIX. THIS THEN IS **THE HORROR OF ALL THE HORRORS...** MORE HORRIBLE THAN YOUR DREAMER HAS CONCEIVED IN ANY OF HIS WILD WISH-DREAMS. IN A **MOMENT**, SLEEP WILL **VANISH**, AND SO WILL YOU...



NO! WAIT! SLEEP SOME MORE! DON'T LISTEN TO THEM! WAIT...

BUT IT IS TOO LATE, FELIX PUROY. THE LAUGHTER IS LOUD. THE DREAMER STIRS. THERE IS A BLINDING LIGHT THAT IS LIKE WHITE-HOT LIQUID METAL, CASCADING AT YOU AND DISSOLVING YOU IN ITS BRILLIANCE...



EEEEAAAGHH...

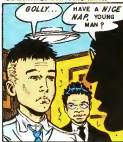
NOW YOU ARE GONE, FELIX PUROY. YOU EXIST NO LONGER. NOW YOU ARE **REALLY DEAD**. YOU HEAR NO MORE LAUGHTER. DAYLIGHT HAS BLANCHED YOU AWAY. BUT THE **DREAMER** HEARS THE LAUGHTER...

A BOY. A BOY LIFTS HIS HEAD FROM HIS HIGH-SCHOOL DESK AND RUBS HIS EYES, SLEEPILY. HIS CLASSMATES SURROUND HIM...

THE BOY LOOKS AROUND. HIS TEACHER STANDS OVER HIM, FUMING...



HUH?



GOLLY...

HAVE A NICE NAP, YOUNG MAN?



I. I'M SORRY, SIR!

YOU SHOULD BE. YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED YOUR EXAM PAPER... AND THE PERIOD IS OVER!

THE BOY GRINS SLEEPILY. THE TEACHER DEFTLY APPLIES A RED PENCIL TO THE BARE EXAMINATION PAPER, SWINGING IT IN A LARGE CIRCLE...

ZERO FOR YOU, YOUNG MAN! I HOPE YOUR LITTLE NAP WAS WORTH IT!

YES... MR. PUROY!



HEH, HEH! SO NOW YOU KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE THE **MAIN CHARACTER** IN A DREAM, EH, FRIENDS? A CHARACTER THAT YOUR DREAMER PARTICULARLY DISLIKES... HEH, HEH... LIKE HIS MATH TEACHER... OR IS IT LATIN, OR MAYBE ENGLISH, IN YOUR CASE? WELL, THAT'S MY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE OF C.K.'S MAG. I'LL DREAM UP ANOTHER NIGHTMARE WHEN NEXT WE MEET. NOW, C.K. AWAKES, SO I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO HIM O'NIGHT! PLEASANT... HEH... HEH... DREAMS?





HEH, HEH! YEP! IT'S ... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Ruaa Cochran

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I watch your show on HBO. And I buy your comics. I have also seen both your movies (DEMON, BORDELLO). I love the story in CRYPT 20 "How Green Was My Alley". Please print my address and could you send me some CRYPT stuff? Your #1 fan,

Petro (Coffin-Keeper) Boucouvalos II 35 School ST
Saco, ME 04072

I was wondering if you could send me some drawings (like the wax exhibits in the story "The Works...in Wax") if you can I would appreciate it. Thank you,

Darren Toland Clayville, PA

Freebies, freebies, freebies! Nobody ever went broke underestimating the taste of the public, and nobody ever got rich giving freebies! -CK

I'm a big fan of everything of yours, your action figures, comics, movies, everything. I was wondering if you could tell me where I could get your comics, movies, and toys, in Phoenix or Payson, AZ. Your big fan,

Joey Kellogg Payson, AZ

How come you don't have a fan club? There are a lot of toys and collectibles that I missed in stores, is there any sick-twisted way you could come out with a catalog?

Are you and Elvra ever going to make a movie? I love everything you do or make! Please print address.

Alex Harrow 14455 SW Sexton MTN DR #7E
Beverton, OR 97008

Now, here are boys ready to take part in a market economy! We'll rely on our readers to tell us about Arizona comics shops, but we offer many EC items (mostly 2D) by mail order ourselves. Writer for details.

Closest I've got to a fan club is the ECazine HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR, issue 9 is still available for \$10 from Bill Leach, 203 Bemaer DR, Pittsburg, CA 94565. He has other goodies, too! -CK

I am one of your ghoulish fans! I can't stop reading your terror-best comics and videos! They rule!!!! Keep up your witchy work! Your Ghoulish Murder,

Freddy Kruger Elm ST, USA

Hi! My name is Shauna. Most people call me "Crypt" because all I do is talk about you! I've seen every single show you've made. I also have seen and still see your new show "Secrets of the Crypt-Keeper's Haunted House." I love horror

My brother hates you. He says he's sick and tired of watching your show and hearing my laugh (oh I know how to laugh your laugh!). My Mom likes you too. We've watched both your movies DEMON NIGHT and BORDELLO OF BLOOD. They were great! Please print my address. Frightfully yours,

"Crypty" 2144 S 15th ST
Shauna Van Elss Philadelphia, PA 19145

What use are brothers, anyway (not counting target practice)? -CK

When I was a child in the fifties—after the comic book code had banished CRYPT and other EC publications—a few of us had issues of the magazine handed down to us by our older siblings. These were cherished archival possessions.

Imagine my delight to find issue #19! It was a wonderful nostalgic trip back to my early childhood. After forty years I still vividly remembered those stories and hoped that I'd be able to read them again some day. Thanks for the mummies!

Richard H. Bush Meriden, CT

And burning lips and burning ships and burning toast and prunes. -CK

It's me again, The Zombie Master. I would just like to ask if on VAULT 32, your #21, is the guy on the front going to have the meat cleaver hanging in his head. Also, I think that the rule for sending in your real name and address really bits some big. Also my friend and me draw our own Horror Comics. My friend draws just as good as the drawers for EC. (Print my address.)

The Zombie Master 114 Howard AV
Arnold, MD 21012

If that rapid Vault-Keeper doesn't chicken out, you'll see that cover uncovered next month. But did you know MY next issue will receive its first uncensored showing just 3 short months from now? -CK

After reading the first 19 issues of CRYPT and the other EC horror titles, I began to wonder if they hadn't been so bad after all, that maybe all the criticism they received in the prudish 50s was unwarranted. Thus, I had been providing my children with inexpensive 64-page reprints (after careful screening, of course). Then I got CRYPT 20 and read Ghatly's horrifying "The Handler." WOW!

At last I had found material so objectionable that there's no way in HELL I'll let my kids see it until they're 18! None of us want to think about what a mortician might do to us when our time comes to be prepared for our crypt, but

this story sure fuels our worst fears! The scene that was the nail in the coffin is what was done to the old maid ("Hands end things" ...EWWWWW!) Naturally, I loved the story. Keep up the good work on the reprints, and thanks for the chills.

Donald P Deaton Fort Wayne, IN

PS) To all of you underage readers out there. Close this comic IMMEDIATELY and take it to the nearest adult for review and potential censorship (They're not paying attention, are they? Well, I hope it scares the living CRAP out of them.)

Just like to keep you on your toes! -CK

I happen to be a big fan of yours. I would first off like to say Johnny Craig is the best EC Comic artist. Your comics keep me entertained and I am going to subscribe. I also want to say your story in VAULT '8 ("Let's Play Poison") was the best. I would like to list my 5 favorite stories from your bone chilling collection:

5) "The Maestro's Hand", 4) "Ghast Ship", 3) "Let's Play Poison", 2) "The Hungry Grave", 1) "A Mute Witness To Murder".

This summer I'm to work up at camp. I'll make sure to have an EC comic book in my hand.

John Aiken Centerville, VA

Especially during latrine breaks! -CK

Your stories are the best. I love your TV shows and movies. I was wondering if you could send me one of your best horror stories, maybe the ones about vampires or zombies. Your bloodsucking tale,

John Farren Austin, TX

My name is David Harfe and I really enjoy reading your comics, and collecting them. CRYPT '8 was brilliant, a real horror issue.

"Midnight Mess" was my favo story, the artwork was class. One thing, though. Page 2, panel 7, when Harold was seated in the restaurant why didn't the vampire waiter notice that Harold has a reflection, or Harold notice that the waiter has no reflection, in the mirror? Was the man sitting at the table a vampire, 'cos he had a reflection? Send some free comics. Please print my address. I want to hear from other EC fans. ECing you,

David Harfe South Circular Road
S Shannon Tie Limerick, IRELAND

In the daytime, the restaurant was all nonvampire; at night, vice-versa! The landlord collected double-rent (the lousy bloodsucker)! TANSTAAFCI (There etc! no such thing as a free comic!) -CK

You're genial. You're perfect. I love your comics and of course I love you, too. I'm sorry that my english sucks but I'm a 15 years young girl from Germany.

I'm one of your greatest fan (stiker). I think you looks very nice. I've got three questions to you. Do you teal real Love? Can I have an autograph from you or something like that? (Please.) Do you like all your fans? (I think the first question sounds silly, but this is serious.)

And I think your friends (Sorry friends) looks not very clever, too. But all your friends are my friends (friends).

Hey, CK! Can I talk with you a while? Eh, you're the only one with whom I can talk about my problems. My school sucks, and my parents suck, too. Sometimes I feel like a loser.

And sometimes I think there is no normal human on the earth, too. Oh, what can I do? The people in my village tease me every day. And tell lies about me. I feel so unhappy. Oh, eh, I think I get on your nerves with my long letter, don't I? OK, I say Good Bye!

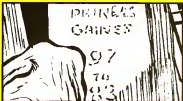
Stefanie Muller Bad Endbach, GERMANY

Although the enomymous editor fixed a few words in your letter, he left most of it intact to share the charm of your nescent English. I'm continually amazed by my foreign readers' English skills! (I know a little Spanish: "Dios cales, to vamoosel!")

I really love all my fans. I will consider buying a pencil, so I can do autographs. How do you spell "CK"? -CK

in CRYPT 20, "The Handler" (last story), page 3, panel 7, there's a gravestone with the inscription "In Memory of _____ Ganes _97 to ____." What is the first name, it looks like it starts with the letter "p"? The date of birth must be '897 and the only number in the date of death that I can clearly read is the last number which appears to be a 3. I know that Bill's father Max died in the late 1940s in a boating accident and his mother was alive when the artwork was done. Who can shed light on this? Puzzled.

David DeLano Kensington, CT



Perhaps this photomicrograph will shed some light, and likely cause you to rethink your conclusions. A hint: see WEIRD SCIENCE 21, available now! -CK

I love your mag! It's so cool. I always go on the net and look for your web site. But the bad news is that issue '8 was my first mag. Can I have the mags '6 and '5? I promise if I get them I'll get all the mags you make. I'll buy back issues, too. Put my address down because I want a pen pal.

Matt Laney 428 Sunset RD
Skillman, NJ 08558

ATTENTION: CHARLES DRAGOO!

I am writing concerning Charles Dragoo who wrote in #18. I am a comic book artist who would like to illustrate CELLAR DWELLER. I am 13 years old. I've made 10 comic books, 3 of them horror books. I have collaborated with a writer on one of them: PSYCHO BILLY. Please print my address! I would like to get in contact with Charles Dragoo very much.

Brian Dishon #102 Matthew CIR
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

The stories [in CRYPT 19] offered a thought provoking progression family tree of undead: brother werewolf, sister vampire, voodooed wife, and, of course, a mummy (no relation to the scheming archeologists)!

This issue was originally available Apr/May 1953. When did MAD first use its "Humor in a Jugular Vein" motif? Is it fair to say that this was inspired by the scene where the hero of "Midnight Mess!" got tapped out in the vampire restaurant?

In "This Wraps It Up!", Professor Thomas Steel's patronym should have been Steel!

Issue 20. After perusing the verbose initial title, "Fare Tonight, Followed by Increasing Clottiness.", I debated weather or not to proceed. Fog goodness sake, I'm glad I did.

In "Curiosity Killed", the evidence was destroyed a smidgen per pigeon in "How Green Was My Alley", it was good to see a left-hander in action. Amy puffing.

Was naming the protagonist Mr. Benedict in "The Handler" a reference to Benedict Arnold? As an honored and trusted Revolutionary War colonel, his betrayal became thereby more heinous. Similarly with Satan, who was once the highest-ranking angel. Please print address.

Bob Gorby

8153 Sunny LN
Cermanito, CA 93012

MAD #1 was released in October, 1952, but who says life is fair?
-CK

Ah! My new CRYPT just arrived and I must say, you didn't disappoint. Firstly, I would like to address some of the very kind people who mentioned me: The Crazy Corpse, Grizley Reaper, and most of all, Jessica Meador, to whom I dedicate this letter. Thank you for your support.

I personally don't think that either the Dark Demon or Blue Demon is Robert Borruso. Philip Smith, maybe, but not Borruso. Borruso had some interesting things to say, while Smith was just rather uptight about everything, going on incessantly about who CRYPT's No. 1 fan is, as if the fate of the world depended upon it. Robert Borruso's not like that.

Grave Digger, don't bother with the Demons. They're not worth the time or effort. By the way, I agree, "Horror We? How's Bayou?" was a wonderfully-drawn tale.

And so, on to the contents of [#19]:

"By The Fright Of The Silvery Moon!" Excellent, one of the ultimate classics. The cover depiction was absolutely stunning. "Midnight Mess!" The best story in the book, or at least I thought so. Perhaps, being a hardcore vampire addict, I'm biased. "Busted Marriage!" Sorry, not into the voodoo thing. Too many voodoo stories in the early issues. They do become rather tiresome. "This Wraps It Up!" This story was at least better than its title. It was better than I expected.

I'm shocked, astounded, and aghast and not in a good way, either! In CRYPT 20, which I received not five minutes ago, I see that you have printed my address as "Rockville, IL." I do not now live, nor have I ever lived, in Illinois (though it's a nice place to visit). My address is still RR 4 Box 141, Rockville IN 47872 and shall be for several years to come. Please rectify this error and hopefully, we can put this all behind us.

Now to address some other matters. Firstly, I would like to say to Grave Digger that there are no hard feelings. I've never been one to hold a grudge, especially against a person who is big enough to apologize. As of the time of this printing, Grave Digger, you have probably already received a letter from me stating this, but I would just like everyone else to now that there is peace between us.

As for the stories, "Fare Tonight" was excellent. I see your mag was plugged on pages two and seven. "How Green Was My Alley" was brilliant, the best story in the entire mag. Not to be outdone, Bradbury's "The Handler" was ingenious, as are all of his works. Ingels did a nice job on the artwork.

In closing, I say this: Buy "CRYPT: THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES" It's worth its weight in plasma. Gravely yours,
Myron James
Rockville, IN

I miss Philip Smith, and hope he'll write again. Is the correct response to perceived uptightness more uptightness? I say nay!
-CK

NEXT ISSUE



Also available this month are WEIRD SCIENCE and PANIC. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, FRONTLINE COMBAT and CRIME! Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, SOLD OUT; FRONT #1-4, \$2 each, all others up thru issue #3, \$1.50 each, CRYPT, W SCI & SHOCK #4-18, and VAULT, W FAN, 2FIST, HAUNT and CRIME #4-15, \$2 each. All others, \$2.50 each. Latest issues CRYPT and W SCI are up to 21, VAULT, W FAN, 2FIST, HAUNT & CRIME are up to 20, FRONT to 9 and PANIC to 3.

Don't forget the entire 11-issue run of WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY/INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION (#1-3, \$1.50 each; #4-11, \$2 each) and the 18 issues of SHOCK SUSPENSION (#1-3, \$1.50 each; #4-15, \$2.00 each; #16-18, \$2.50 each)!

Add \$5 per order (\$10 outside US) for S&H.

Write to:
CRYPT
GEMSTONE
POB 485
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS

TALES FROM THE CRYPT #37* (#21, AUG/SEP 1953)

COVER by Jack Davis

"Dead Right!"

Jack Davis

"Reasant Screams!"

Joe Orlando

"Strop! You're Killing Me!"

Bill Elder

"The Rover Boys!"

Graham Ingels

We welcome letters of approval. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We will do so clearly, promptly and lengthily. We automatically withhold names and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. Periodicals may be used if you provide us with your accurate name and address. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the enclosed label.

HERE'S A TERROR TIDBIT TO WHET
YOUR DULLED FIENDISH APPETITES.

**STROP! YOU'RE
KILLING ME!**

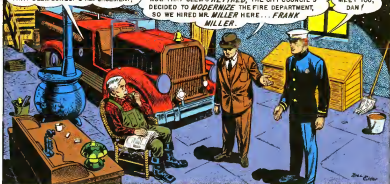


OLD DAN HARPER WAS SITTING IN HIS USUAL WICKER ARM-CHAIR READING HIS USUAL DAILY PAPER AND SMOKING HIS USUAL CORN-COB PIPE WHEN THEY CAME INTO THE LYNDALE FIRE-HOUSE. HE LOOKED UP FROM HIS PAPER TO SEE GRIM-FACED MAYOR WITTER AND THE STRANGER IN THE BLUE UNIFORM WITH THE GOLD BUTTONS AND THE DAZZLING WHITE CAP...

AFTERNOON, MAYOR WITTER. IS THAT CLEM DUNLOP'S REPLACEMENT?

NOT EXACTLY, DAN. THIS IS LYNDALE'S NEW FIRE CHIEF! NOW THAT CLEM'S RETIRED, THE CITY COUNCIL'S DECIDED TO MODERNIZE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, SO WE HIRED MR. MILLER HERE... FRANK MILLER.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, DAN!



OLD DAN COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS EARS. FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, HE AND CLEM DUNLOP HAD COMPRISED LYNDALE'S TWO-MAN FIRE DEPARTMENT. NOW THAT CLEM HAD RETIRED, OLD DAN HAD EXPECTED THE TOWN FATHERS TO HIRE A REPLACEMENT FOR HIM, BUT HE'D NEVER EXPECTED THEM TO HIRE SOMEONE WHO'D BE OLD DAN'S SUPERIOR...

NEW FIRE-CHIEF! BUT... I D DN'T UNDERSTAND! I'M SENIOR MEMBER NOW!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED, DAN. METHODS OF FIGHTING FIRES HAVE CHANGED TOO! CHIEF MILLER WILL BE IN FULL CHARGE FROM NOW ON. WHAT HE SAYS GOES! I'M... SORRY...



MAYOR WITTER TURNED TO CHIEF MILLER, SMILING...

WELL, SIR, THIS IS IT. LET ME SAY THAT ANY IMPROVEMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE, THE COUNCIL WILL GLADLY CONSIDER. I HAVE TO GET BACK TO MY DESK, SO...

OF COURSE, MAYOR WITTER. GOOD AFTERNOON.



MAYOR WITTER LEFT AND LYNDALÉ'S NEW FIRE CHIEF LOOKED AROUND...

HMMMM WELL, DAN, WE'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO, SO LET'S GET MOVING...

WORK? WHAT KIND OF WORK?



CHIEF MILLER WAVED HIS HAND AT THE OLD FIRE-ENGINE.

FIRST OF ALL, WE'RE GOING TO PAINT AND POLISH THAT OLD ENGINE TILL SHE SPARKLES. IT'S IN TERRIBLE CONDITION! LOOK AT 'ER!

PAINT 'ER? POLISH 'ER? WHY? IS SHE GONNA FIGHT FIRES BETTER IF WE DO?



CHIEF MILLER'S FACE GREW VERY STERN... LOOK HERE, MR. HARPER, I'M IN CHARGE NOW, AND WHAT I SAY GOES!

AND I SAY WE'RE GOING TO POLISH AND SHINE THAT FIRE-TRUCK... AND KEEP IT POLISHED!

OKAY! DRAY!



NOT 'OKAY! YES, CHIEF! Y-YES... CHIEF!

NOW, GO DOWN TO THE HARDWARE STORE AND GET TWO CANS OF BRASS POLISH, TWO CANS OF CHROME POLISH, TWO GALLONS OF RED PAINT, TWO BRUSHES, AND SOME RAGS...



OLD DAN HOBBLING OFF DOWN THE STREET TOWARD THE HARDWARE STORE... HMMMM. AFTER SEVENTEEN YEARS, THEY HIRE SOME YOUNG WHIPPER-SNAPPER WITH NEW-FANGLED IDEAS TO BOSS ME AROUND. HMMMM.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER HE RETURNED TO THE FIREHOUSE, HIS ARMS FILLED WITH PACKAGES...

HERE'S WHAT YOU WANTED, YOUNG FELLER! WHEW!

'CHIEF MILLER', IF YOU DONT MIND, MR. HARPER. WELL, LET'S GET TO WORK...

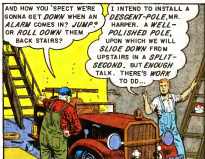


DAN LOOKED AROUND...

JUS' LEMME CATCH MY BREATH. LEMME SET FOR A SPELL IN MY...MY...SAY? WHERE IN BLAZES IS MY WICKER CHAIR?

I PUT IT UP-STAIRS, MR. HARPER. THEY'LL BE NO LOLLING AROUND DOWN HERE FROM NOW ON!

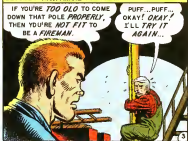




SO OLD DAN HARPER WAS FORCED TO WORK HIS HEART OUT FOR THE NEW CHIEF. HE POLISHED AND PAINTED TILL HIS OLD BONES ACHED. FOR THERE WERE TWO THINGS THAT H-D MEANT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD TO DAN: HIS JOB IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND THE SMALL HOUSE JUST OUTSIDE OF TOWN TO WHICH HE NOW RETURNED, EXHAUSTED, EACH NIGHT...



OLD DAN'S LITTLE HOUSE WAS HIS PRIDE AND JOY. AND HIS JOB WITH LYNDALE'S FIRE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN HIS WHOLE LIFE. BUT NOW, CHIEF MILLER HAD COME UPON THE SCENE, AND OLD DAN'S JOB HAD BECOME A NIGHTMARE FOR HIM...



CHIEF MILLER MADE IT ROUGH ON OLD DAN. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE CONSIDERED DAN TOO OLD FOR THE JOB AND WAS TRYING TO DISCOURAGE HIM... TO MAKE HIM QUIT. BUT OLD DAN WAS STUBBORN...



EVENIN', CHIEF MILLER.

YOU'RE *THREE MINUTES LATE*, MR. HARPER. I INSIST UPON *PUNCTUALITY* WHEN REPORTING FOR OUTFY!

SHUCKS, IT WAS SUCH A *NICE NIGHT*, I *WALKED* INTO TOWN.

WELL, *DON'T* LET IT HAPPEN *AGAIN*. DURING YOUR SHIFT TONIGHT, I WANT YOU TO *POLISH ALL THE BRASS*... UNDERSTAND?



ALTHOUGH LYNDALE'S FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS RARELY CALLED UPON BECAUSE OF ITS SMALL POPULATION (52, LAST CENSUS), CHIEF MILLER HAD INSTITUTED A TWO-SHIFT, TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR-A-DAY POLICY...



POLISH ALL THE BRASS? YES, SIR. EH...HOW'S YOUR *NEW HOUSE*, CHIEF MILLER?

VERY NICE. WELL, GOOD-NIGHT, MR. HARPER.

THERE WERE TIMES WHEN OLD DAN HAD THE URGE TO CHUCK THE WHOLE DEAL. THE CONSTANT PRESSURES EXERTED ON HIM BY THE NEW FIRE CHIEF CERTAINLY MADE HIM MISERABLE, BUT HE'D GRITTED HIS TEETH AND STUCK DOGGEDLY TO THE JOB...



I *WON'T* GIVE UP. I *WON'T*. NO YOUNG JOHNNY-COME-LATELY IS GOING TO MAKE ME TOSS AWAY A JOB I'VE HAD FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS. *WHERE'S THAT BLASTED POLISH*...

CHIEF MILLER FINALLY WENT TO SEE MAYOR WITTER...



FIRE-FIGHTING IS A *YOUNG MAN'S* PROFESSION, MAYOR. MR. HARPER IS *700 OLD*.

SORRY, CHIEF MILLER. I *COULDN'T* FIRE HIM.

LUT, HE'S A *HINDRANCE* MORE THAN A *HELP*. I'VE *TRIED* TO *DISCOURAGE* HIM...



IF HE *WON'T* QUIT, THEN YOUR JUST HAVE TO *KEEP* HIM ON TILL HE REACHES *RETIREMENT* AGE...

BUT THAT'S NOT FOR ANOTHER *FIVE YEARS!*

I *KNOW* THAT, CHIEF MILLER. MAYBE *YOU* CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO *CONVINCE* HIM...



IT WAS WHILE CHIEF MILLER WAS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT THAT THE ALARM CAME IN...

215 ELM. HURRY! THE ³HUR! OLD PLACE IS BLAZIN! ²DAN! OLD I THINK OLD DAN'S DAN HARPER! TRAPPED INSIDE... I'LL BE RIGHT THERE...



CHIEF MILLER LEAPED FROM HIS COT. THEN, HE STOPPED...

OF COURSE! WHAT AM I RUSHING FOR? NOW I CAN GET RID OF THAT OLD CODGER ONCE AND FOR ALL...



SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, HE DRESSED IN HIS FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT...

HEH, HEH! TRAPPED... EH?



JUST BEFORE PUTTING ON HIS RUBBER BOOTS, THE CHIEF LIT A CIGARETTE...

THAT'S TOO BAD...



HE SMOKED A WHILE, THEN PUT THE CIGARETTE OUT AND DONNED HIS BOOTS...

I CAN KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE! I'LL SAY THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK WOULDN'T START!



HE SLID SLOWLY DOWN THE POLISHED DESCENT-POLE...

I'LL GET RID OF OLD DAN, AND I'LL CONVINCE THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT THEY NEED A NEW FIRE-TRUCK... BOTH AT THE SAME TIME!



CHIEF MILLER UNLOCKED THE HOOD OF THE FIRE-TRUCK AND GRINNED IN AT THE ENGINE...

I WONDER WHY IT WOULDN'T START... HEH, HEH...



THEN HE STROLLED TO THE FIRE-HOUSE DOORS AND SWUNG THEM OPEN...

WELL. THAT OUGHT TO DO IT! IT'S BEEN FIFTEEN MINUTES SINCE THE CALL CAME IN...



THE OLD FIRE-TRUCK LEAPED FROM THE FIRE-HOUSE, SIREN SCREAMING...

HEH, HEH...



WHEN THE FIRE-TRUCK FINALLY ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, OLD DAN'S HOUSE HAD BURNED TO THE GROUND WITH OLD DAN INSIDE IT...

I COULDN'T GET THE OLD ENGINE STARTED! IT WAS AWFUL...

HE... HE COULD'VE BEEN SAVED IF YOU'D GOTTEN HERE RIGHT AFTER I CALLED...



OF COURSE, NO ONE SUSPECTED CHIEF MILLER OF DELIBERATELY STALLING IN GETTING TO THE FIRE THAT HAD KILLED OLD DAN. THEY BELIEVED HIS STORY... AND A MONTH LATER, THE NEW FIRE-TRUCK ARRIVED...

HEH, HEH...



BUT ONE NIGHT, CHIEF MILLER RECEIVED ANOTHER ALARM. THE VOICE ON THE LINE WAS STRANGE... ALMOST LAUGHING...

71 BEECHTREE DRIVE... YES... WHAT A BLAZE! HURRY...

71 BEECHTREE DRIVE! WHY THAT'S MY HOUSE!



CHIEF MILLER DIDN'T STALL AROUND THIS TIME. THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY. HE LEAPED FROM HIS COT, AND DRESSED LIKE A DEMON.

THAT VOICE ON THE PHONE... IT SOUNDED FAMILIAR! WELL, I CAN'T WASTE TIME THINKING ABOUT THAT NOW...



HE RUSHED TO THE DESCENT-POLE, WRAPPED HIS ARMS AND LEGS AROUND IT, AND PLUMMETED DOWNWARD...

OH, LORD... I KNOW! I KNOW WHOSE VOICE THAT WAS! IT WAS HIS! OLD DAN HARPER'S! NO! NO, IT COULDN'T...



THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND WHAT WAS LEFT OF CHIEF MILLER LYING BESIDE THE NEW FIRE-ENGINE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DESCENT-POLE IN A POOL OF DRYING BLOOD. HIS ARMS AND LEGS HAD BEEN SEVERED FROM HIS BODY AND HIS TORSO NEARLY SPLIT IN TWO. SOMEONE... OR SOMETHING... HAD REPLACED THE DESCENT-POLE WITH A STEEL STRIP SHARPENED TO A KEEN RAZOR-EDGE.



WHICH BRINGS MY TALE TO A CUTTING CLIMAX, EH, FIENOS? CAN YOU PICTURE SLICING DOWN A FIFTEEN-FOOT KNIFE BLADE? QUITE A STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION, EH? WASN'T THAT A GEM OF A YARN? I'LL RAZOR 'NOTHER ONE NEXT TIME WE MEET... IN V.K.'S SHARP MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR!

AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH AWAITS WITH HER HONE-COOKED YARN. 'BYE, NOWFOH, BY THE WAY, GILLETTE THE CAT OUT TONIGHT? 'BYE!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE. SMELL THE CONCOCTION I'M COOKIN' IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON? IT'S A REEKING RECIPE OF REVOLTING REVELRY THAT I'M SURE YOU'LL ENJOY. THIS IS YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, WAITING TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF HER LURID LUNCHEONS. READY? THEN I'LL START FEEDING YOU THE FOUL FARE I CALL...

The ROVER BOYS!

PROLOGUE: THE DAWN SKY IS LIKE A GREY BLANKET HANGING LOW OVER THE STILL-SLEEPING CITY. HERE AND THERE A FEW STARS, RELUCTANT TO RETREAT FROM THE DAYLIGHT NOW BLOOMING IN THE EAST, TWINKLE FAINTLY AND THEN FADE. BELOW, THE STREET-LIGHTS STILL CAST DARK SHADOWS IN THE CANYONS BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS. A MILK WAGON CAREENS OVER THE COBBLE-STONES, ITS FRANTIC DRIVER UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTING TO HALT THE OLD HORSEWHO WHINNIES AND SNORTS, GALLOPING MADLY. FLASHING METAL-SHOOD HOOVES SPARK AGAINST THE PAVEMENT. A PACK OF STRAY DOGS, SLOBBERING AND YELPING, LEAP AND SCRAMBLE... NIPPING AND CLAWING AT THE DASHING HORSE. ITS FLANKS ARE SCARRED AND BLEEDING... ITS EYES FILLED WITH TERROR...



WNOA THERE, BOY! WNOA...



STORY: DOCTOR SHELDON REMSEN STOOD BEFORE THE FIVE GRIM-FACED MEMBERS OF THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD LISTENING TO THE CHAIRMAN'S COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS VOICE MOUTHING THE WORDS THAT MEANT THE END OF EVERYTHING FOR HIM...

AND SO, DOCTOR REMSEN, IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS BOARD, IN VIEW OF THE EVIDENCES PRESENTED HERE OF CONDUCT UNBECOMING A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, THAT YOUR LICENSE BE REVOKED AND THAT YOU BE BARRED FROM EVER PRACTISING MEDICINE AGAIN.

NO!
NO!



THE CHAIRMAN LOOKED AROUND, THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ROSE SILENTLY AND FILED FROM THE ROOM. DR. SHELDON REMSEN LIFTED HIS HANDS IN A FINAL PLEADING GESTURE.

PLEASE! I BEG OF YOU... DON'T DO THIS TO ME. MEDICINE IS MY LIFE! PLEASE...



DR. REMSEN DARTED FORWARD. HE GLUTCHED AT THE SLEEVE OF THE LAST DEPARTING BOARD MEMBER...

WON'T YOU RECONSIDER? I BEG YOU FOR LENIENCY! I MADE A MISTAKE! I'M SORRY! PLEASE.

THE DECISION OF THE BOARD IS FINAL, DR. REMSEN. IF YOU PLEASE...



DOCTOR REMSEN STOOD ALONE IN THE BOARD ROOM. FAINT LAUGHTER DRAFTED THROUGH THE DOOR BEYOND WHICH HIS JUDGERS AND CONDEMNERS HAD DISAPPEARED HE CURSED...

GO AHEAD, YOU RIGHTEOUS OLD W*#%\$!%\$! LAUGH! LAUGH AT ME! WE'LL SEE WHO HAS THE LAST LAUGH...



STRIPPED OF HIS PRIVILEGE TO PRACTISE MEDICINE, AND SPURNED BY HIS PROFESSION, DR. REMSEN WALKED SLOWLY FROM THE BOARD ROOM, ACROSS THE ECHOING FOYER OF THE MEDICAL BUILDING, AND OUT INTO THE WARM SUNLIGHT. HE FELT NAKED AND EXPOSED, AND HATE FILLED HIS HEART...

I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE! YOU'LL BE SORRY... ALL OF YOU!



HE MOVED UP THE CROWDED STREETS. HE WAS JOSTLED AND PUSHED AND CARRIED ALONG BY THE JABBING THROGS. BUT HE FELT AND HEARD NOTHING. DR. REMSEN'S MIND WAS FAR AWAY, PLANNING, DISCLAIMING, AND PLANNING AGAIN...

I HATE THEM! I'LL GET EACH OF THEM... ONE BY ONE! BUT HOW? HOW?



A SHADOW FELL ACROSS HIM, BLOCKING THE SUN. DR. REMSEN LOOKED AROUND. HE WAS UNDER A MARQUEE... A THEATER MARQUEE. THE COLORFUL BILLBOARD BLINKED AT HIM...

HMMM. 'CAPTAIN JOHN SMYTHE AND HIS TRAINED SEALS. SEE THEM PERFORM. THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!'



THE LAST LINE SCREAMED. THE WORDS SEEM TO LIGHT UP...

'THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!' OF COURSE...



THE DOCTOR SLID THE MONEY UNDER THE BOX-OFFICE GLASS AND HELD UP HIS INDEX-FINGER...



LAUGHTER ERUPTED FROM A HUNDRED MOUTHS AS HE MOVED SOFTLY DOWN THE CARPETED AISLE. ON-STAGE, A CLOWN WAS CAVORTING...



THE CLOWN SOMERSAULTED OFF INTO THE WINGS AMID CHEERS AND APPLAUSE. DR. REMSEN SAT DOWN...



THE CURTAIN WENT UP. THE GLIMMERING BLACK SEALS BARKED AND SWAYED. THEIR UNIFORMED TRAINER BEGAN THE ACT. DR. REMSEN'S GRIM MOUTH SLOWLY STRETCHED INTO A LEERING GRIN.



THE ACT WAS OVER. DR. REMSEN LEFT THE THEATER. HIS EVIL PLAN WAS FORMING IN HIS HATE-FILLED MIND...



THE PET SHOP SMELLED OF FLEA-POWDER AND ANIMAL SWEAT AND BIRD-SEED AND ECHOED WITH THE SQUEALS OF MONKEYS AND PARROTS AND THE HOWLING OF DOGS...



WE HAVE SOME FINE THOROUGHBRED BOXERS... OR WOULD YOU PREFER FRENCH-POODLES...



DOCTOR REMSEN'S LABORATORY WAS SILENT EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL WHINES OF THE DOGS THAT COVERED BEHIND THE WIRE MESH OF THE FIVE CAGES THAT LINED THE ROOM. THE DOCTOR WAS BUSY PLACING SHINY INSTRUMENTS INTO A STEAMING STERILIZER...

A KNOCK RESOUNDED THROUGH THE LABORATORY. THE DOGS BEGAN TO YELP. DOCTOR REMSEN WENT TO THE DOOR AND OPENED IT...

YOU! REMSEN!
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE NOW? BUT I THOUGHT...

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE PAYING A HOUSE-CALL ON A SICK MAN, EH, DOCTOR HALE? THAT'S WHAT I WANTED YOU TO THINK!

SOON, MY LITTLE PETS. SOON NOW...



DOCTOR REMSEN WAIVED THE SMALL PISTOL AT THE SURPRISED BOARD-CHAIRMAN...

INSIDE, DOCTOR HALE! AND DON'T TRY ANYTHING. I WON'T HESITATE TO USE THIS...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, REMSEN?



IT MEANS, MY DEAR CHAIRMAN OF THE MEDICAL BOARD, THAT I AM GOING TO TAKE MY REVENGE UPON YOU AND YOUR FELLOW BOARD-MEMBERS FOR HAVING EXCLUDED ME FROM YOUR PROFESSION!

YOU'RE MAD, REMSEN.



PERHAPS, DOCTOR HALE? AND NOW, IF YOU WILL REMOVE YOUR COAT, WE WILL GET ON WITH THE OPERATION.

OPERATION? WHAT, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



DO? WHY, I AM GOING TO REMOVE YOUR BRAIN, DOCTOR, AND SUBSTITUTE IT FOR THE INADEQUATE BRAIN THAT NOW RESTS IN THE CRANIAL CAVITY OF ONE OF THOSE MISERABLE DOGS THERE!

REMSSEN! FOR GOD'S SAKE! PUT DOWN THAT HYPODERMIC!



OUTSIDE THE OLD HOUSE INTO WHICH DOCTOR REMSEN HAD MOVED HIS LABORATORY, THE WIND BISHED, CARRYING THE ECHO OF DOCTOR HALE'S SCREAM ACROSS THE DESERTED COUNTRYSIDE...



ON THE NIGHTS THAT FOLLOWED, ONE BY ONE, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD CAME TO THE LONELY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY...

YOU'P
RENSEN?

WELCOME,
DOCTOR SIMPSON!

ONE BY ONE, THEY CAME... BUT NONE WENT AWAY. ON THE FIFTH MORNING, FIVE FRESH-DUG GRAVES LAY SILENTLY IN THE DAWN-LIGHT BEHIND THE HOUSE...



INSIDE, IN THE LABORATORY, FIVE DOGS WITH HUMAN BRAINS COVERED BEHIND THE MESH-WIRED DOORS OF THEIR KENNELS...

YOU WILL PERFORM AS YOU ARE BID, MY FRIENDS. EVEN IN YOUR ALIEN BOOIES, YOU STILL HAVE THE DESIRE TO SURVIVE...



AND YOU WILL SURVIVE SO LONG AS YOU COOPERATE! IF YOU DON'T... YOU WILL DIE! AND NOW... WE MUST BEGIN REHEARSING OUR ACT!



AND SO, SILENTLY, WITH TAILS BETWEEN THEIR LEGS, AND A GROWING HATE GLEAMING IN THEIR EYES, THE FIVE REMARKABLY INTELLIGENT CANINES WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF LEARNING THEIR FABULOUS ACT...

MY DEAR DOCTOR HALE. PERHAPS A DAY WITHOUT YOUR RATIONS WILL CONVINCE YOU THAT I MEAN BUSINESS! WHEN I CALL 'ROVER!', YOU BARK THE ANSWER...CORRECTLY!



FINALLY, THE TIME CAME. UNDER AN ASSUMED NAME, DR. SHELDON REMSEN MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A THEATRICAL AGENT AND PROUDLY AUDITIONED HIS ANIMAL ACT...

AMAZING, MR. SHELDON!
AMAZING! I'LL BOOK YOUR ACT IN EVERY VAUDEVILLE HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY!
YOU'RE MADE...



AND SO, IN THE VERY SAME THEATER WHERE DR. SHELDON REMSEN HAD SEEN THE TRAINED SEALS THAT HAD GIVEN HIM HIS FANTASTIC AND DIABOLICAL SCHEME, SHELDON'S DOGS MADE THEIR THEATRICAL DEBUT...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE GREATEST ANIMAL ACT TO EVER PERFORM UPON ANY STAGE. SHELDON'S INTELLIGENT DOGS, THEY COUNT... THEY SPELL...THEY DO EVERYTHING BUT TALK!



DR. REMSEN'S ANIMAL ACT GAINED IMMEDIATE SUCCESS. HIS AMAZING DOGS ASTOUNDED PEOPLE. DOGS COULD BE TRAINED TO APPEAR INTELLIGENT, BUT HIS...



YOUR QUESTION, SIR?

WHAT YEAR DID COLUMBUS DISCOVER AMERICA?

THE DOGS ACTUALLY PICKED OUT CARDS CONTAINING THE CORRECT ANSWERS TO MATHEMATICAL PROBLEMS, HISTORICAL DATES...

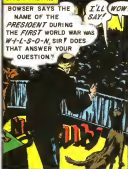


1492! QUITE CORRECT, ROVER!

AMAZING! INCREDIBLE!

BRAVO!

THE DOGS MANIPULATED ALPHABET BLOCKS TO ANSWER QUESTIONS GIVEN THEM...



BOWSER SAYS THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENT DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS W-T-L-S-O-N, SIR? DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION?

I'LL WOW! SAY!

FINALLY, DUE TO THE GRUELLING SCHEDULE OF TRAVELLING THE VAUDEVILLE CIRCUITS, DR. REMSEN RETURNED TO HIS LONELY HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN FOR A BRIEF VACATION.



HEH, HEH! WELL, MY LITTLE PETS! THANKS TO YOU, I AM GETTING RICHER EACH DAY!

SOON, I WILL BE READY TO RETIRE! OH IT WILL BE SUCH A SHOCK TO THE THEATRICAL WORLD WHEN YOU ARE ALL DESTROYED IN AN UNFORTUNATE FIRE!



THE NIGHT THAT DOCTOR REMSEN MADE HIS STARTLING PRONOUNCEMENT AS TO THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN-BRAINED CANINES, HE CARELESSLY LEFT ONE OF THE WIRE-MESH KENNEL DOORS UNLOCKED, AFTER HE'D RETIRED, A SLEEK FORM MOVED FROM KENNEL TO KENNEL, UNLOCKING THE OTHER DOORS...



DOCTOR REMSEN HAD BEEN RIGHT. THE DESIRE TO SURVIVE WAS INDEED STRONG... EVEN FOR IMPRISONED HUMAN BRAINS. A LOW GROWL AWAKENED THE DOCTOR AND HE SAT UP IN BED STARING INTO FIVE PAIRS OF BLAZING EYES...



NO! OH, LORD, NO...

ONE OF THE REMARKABLE DOGS HELD A HYPODERMIC IN ITS Slobbering MOUTH...

TOWARD MORNING, AN OLD HORSE ON A NEAR BY FARM WAS ATTACKED BY A PACK OF YELPING WILD DOGS AND DRIVEN TOWARD THE OLD HOUSE...

AND DAWN FOUND A SIXTH GRAVE ADDED TO THE SILENT FIVE...



THE FARMER WHO OWNED THE HORSE FOUND IT WANDERING MILES FROM THE FARM THE NEXT DAY...

AND FIVE DOGS WERE SEEN OFTEN IN LATER WEEKS, YELPING AND RACING THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY...

THE MILK COMPANY RECEIVED NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE NEW HORSE FROM ITS DRIVER...

THERE YOU ARE, BOY! GET ALONG HOME NOW. THAT MILK COMPANY MAN'S COMIN' TO BUY YOU!



CRAZY, THAT'S WHAT HE IS. ALWAYS SMORTIN' AND WHINNYIN' AND STAMPIN' HIS HOOF'S... LIKE HE WERE TRYIN' TO TELL ME SOMETHIN'!



EPILOGUE: THE DAWN SKY IS LIKE A GREY BLANKET. A MILK-WAGON CAREENS OVER THE COBBLESTONES, ITS HORSE GALLOPING MADLY. A PACK OF STRAY DOGS... FIVE OF THEM... SLOBBERING AND BARKING... LEAP AND SCRAMBLE, NIPPING AND CLAWING AT THE FRENZIED ANIMAL. ITS FLANKS ARE SCARRED AND BLEEDING... ITS EYES FILLED WITH TERROR. AND THE YELPING DOGS SEEM TO BE LAUGHING AT IT...



WHOA THERE, BOY! WHOA!

HEE, HEE! SO DOC REMSEN, CAUSE HE HORSED AROUND WITH BRAINS, ENDED UP WITH HIS IN ONE. WELL, KIDDIES, NEXT TIME YOU SEE A PACK OF HOWLIN' MUTTS CHASIN' AN OLD HORSE UP THE STREET, THINK OF THIS TERROR-TIDBIT I'VE JUST FED YOU. DON'T LAUGH! THEY MIGHT BE THE STATE MEDICAL BOARD HOUNDING DOCTOR SHELDON



REMSEN! HEE, HEE. WELL, THAT ABOUT WINDS UP G.K.'S MAB. I'LL BE COOKIN' AGAIN IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE, NOW.